

Information on The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

Background to the Convention

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are organic substances produced and released into the environment as a result of natural and human activities. They can persist for many years in the environment because they do not dissolve in water or break down easily in the environment. They concentrate in fat tissues of animals, reaching their highest concentrations in predatory fish, birds, marine and aquatic mammals, and humans. POPs are semi-volatile. Through repeated evaporation and deposition, they can be transported many 1000s of miles from their initial sources of release. Consequently, they are now found in humans living on all continents, including in locations where no POPs have ever been produced or used.

Adverse health effects can be either acute (severe and with a sudden onset) or chronic. Health effects associated with POPs include allergies, damage to the nervous and respiratory systems and to organs, reproductive and immune system dysfunction, sex-linked disorders, birth defects, neurobehavioral and developmental disorders, endocrine disruption, cancer, shortened lactation periods for nursing mothers, and, in extreme cases, death (including abortion of the foetus). The foetus and children are at higher risk than adults because of the hormone-mediated changes they are undergoing, which govern several aspects of both development and growth, their physiology (weight, height, respiration rate, etc.) and, in the case of young children, their habits, such as hand-to-mouth ingestion.

The realization of threats led a number of countries to introduce policies and legal and regulatory instruments to manage an increasing number of these substances. However; because of POPs' persistence and propensity to undergo transboundary movement, countries began to seek bilateral, regional and multinational cooperative actions.

Name of the Convention

'The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants' is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically and accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife.

Date of Signature

Stockholm Convention is adopted on 22 May (22-23, May) 2001 to protect human health and environment. Bangladesh signed the Convention on 23 May 2001.

Ratification

Bangladesh ratified the convention on 12 March 2007.

Party to the UNFCCC: 169 (as of 24 February 2010)

Name of the Competent Authority: Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Name of National Focal Point: Director General, Department of Environment.

Obligations (if any)

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants was adopted 22 May 2001 and entered into force ninety days after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession by a country to the Convention, 17 May 2004. It requires Parties to take measures to eliminate or reduce the release of POPs into the environment. The Convention is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme and based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Opportunities

The Convention aims to control the illegal trafficking of POPs and POPs contaminated wastes and concern about the environmental release by the final disposal of such wastes. Besides preparation of guidelines for the specific POPs contaminated wastes, sharing common facilities for regional centres are the example of collaboration.

Reports/Document Prepared:

1. Bangladesh National Implementation Plan (NIP) for Management of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
2. Inventory on Dioxin and Furans
3. Inventory on POPs Pesticides
4. Inventory on PCBs
5. Report on the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Stockpile and Waste Management

6. Final Report (Part 1: Survey) on Survey and Research on DDT and PCB in food items and environmental samples.
7. Final Report (Part 11: Research) on Survey and Research on DDT and PCB in food items and environmental samples.

Linkages/Conflict with other MEAs

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants has a linkage with Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (Bangladesh accessed the convention on 1 April, 1993) & Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure For Certain Hazardous Chemicals & Pesticides in International Trade Rotterdam, Bangladesh is not a party of this convention. Both the Conventions aim to protect human health and environment from certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides, therefore effective implementation of one helps to meet the objective of other. There are numerous decisions made by COPs, for complementing each others mandate.

An ad-hoc joint working group on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention was established by the Conference of Parties of each of the Convention. The group is composed of 15 representatives of parties of each Convention for a total of forty-five members. Meetings of the group are not open to observers. The mandate of the group is to prepare joint recommendations on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the three Conventions for consideration by the Conferences of the Parties of each.

Ongoing activities/initiatives undertaken

Bangladesh developed a National Implementation Plan (NIP) on POPs as an effective response measure to achieve Stockholm Convention objectives with support from Global Environment Facility (GEF). NIP was prepared from a project— *Bangladesh: Preparation of the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) National Implementation Plan under the Stockholm Convention*, implemented by the department of environment. An overall management option is coated to phase -out POPs and several priority projects are identified. The project has successfully completed. The final outcome of the project is the NIP which will lead us to phase out POPs by implementing its priority projects. The Government of Bangladesh is therefore committed to support for sustainable development that includes development and implementation of a national policy for management of POPs chemicals and POPs alternatives, with the aim of protecting the health of its people and environment.